

What We Do



At the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), we work together to make a positive impact on America's economy, our capital markets, and people's lives.

For more than 85 years since our founding at the height of the Great Depression, we have stayed true to our mission of protecting investors, maintaining fair, orderly, and efficient markets, and facilitating capital formation.

Our mission requires tireless commitment and unique expertise from our staff of dedicated professionals who care deeply about protecting Main Street investors and others who rely on our markets to secure their financial futures.

Learn more about specific SEC functions and responsibilities carried out by [various divisions and offices](#) within our Washington D.C. headquarters and [in regional offices](#) around the country.

RESOURCES

- [Before You Invest, Investor.gov](#)
- [Check Your Investment Professional](#)
- [EDGAR \(Company Filings\)](#)
- [Tips/Complaints](#)
- [Whistleblower Office](#)
- [Securities Laws](#)

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PROTECTING INVESTORS



FACILITATING CAPITAL FORMATION



MAINTAINING FAIR, ORDERLY, AND EFFICIENT MARKETS

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Companies offering securities for sale to the public must tell the truth about their business, the securities they are selling, and the investment

risks.

Those who sell and trade securities and offer advice to investors – including, for example, brokers, dealers, investment advisers, and exchanges – must treat investors fairly and honestly.

PROTECTING INVESTORS

Our focus on Main Street investors reflects the fact that American households own \$38 trillion worth of equities — more than 59 percent of the U.S. equity market — either directly or indirectly through mutual funds, retirement accounts and other investments.

The federal securities laws we oversee are based on a simple and straightforward concept: everyone should be treated fairly and have access to certain facts about investments and those who sell them.

To achieve this, we require public companies, fund and asset managers, investment professionals, and other market participants to regularly disclose significant financial and other information so investors have the timely, accurate, and complete information they need to make confident and informed decisions about when or where to invest.

We protect investors by vigorously [enforcing](#) the federal securities laws to hold wrongdoers accountable and deter future misconduct. We provide investor education and resources through our [Office of Investor Education and Advocacy](#).

Learn more about how we inform and protect people as they navigate the securities markets by visiting our [investor education website Investor.gov](#) for tools, resources, and initiatives tailored to Main Street investors.

We return hundreds of millions of dollars to harmed investors each year as a result of our enforcement actions against wrongdoers.

FACILITATING CAPITAL FORMATION

Our regulatory regime provides companies and entrepreneurs with a variety of avenues to access America's capital markets to help them create jobs, develop life-changing innovations and technology, and provide financial opportunities for those who invest in them.

There were nearly 3,400 reported public offerings in 2020 at a median size of \$360 million and an average amount raised of \$550 million.

Access to capital is particularly critical for small businesses to grow and scale. Learn more about what we do to facilitate ways to raise capital by visiting our [small business information site](#) as well as our [Office of the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation](#).



In 2020, nearly \$5 trillion was raised in public and private securities offerings, promoting economic growth and job creation

Small businesses account for 65% of net new jobs created.



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We monitor the activities of more than 28,000 entities in the securities industry, including investment advisers, broker-dealers, and securities exchanges.

MAINTAINING FAIR, ORDERLY AND EFFICIENT MARKETS

Our U.S. capital markets are the deepest, most dynamic, and most liquid in the world.

They also have evolved to become increasingly fast and extraordinarily complex.

It is our job to be responsive and innovative in the face of significant market developments and trends. As technological advancements and commercial developments have changed how our securities markets operate, our ability to remain an effective regulator requires us to continuously monitor the market environment and, as appropriate, adjust and modernize our expertise, rules, regulations, and oversight tools and activities.

Learn more about our active engagement with innovators, developers, and entrepreneurs by visiting our [Strategic Hub for Innovation and Financial Technology](#). And since making Wall Street work for Main Street means gathering input from investors directly, please [tell us about your own experiences](#) and let us know what you think about our various proposed rules.

We oversee approximately \$115 trillion in securities trading on U.S. equity markets annually.

OUR MISSION CONTINUES

As we go forward, our longstanding three-part mission remains our touchstone.

We continue to review and recalibrate our efforts as we strive to fulfill that mission by elevating our performance through technology, data analytics, and human capital.

We continue to innovate in response to evolving markets and inspire the full confidence of the investing public and market participants alike.

And we continue to focus on the interests of long-term Main Street investors who are entrusting their hard-earned savings to our securities markets to fund home purchases, college educations, and other important life events.

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